



Superior Court of California

COUNTY OF VENTURA
Hall of Justice
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Michael D. Planet
*Executive Officer/Clerk
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JUDGE ROLAND PURNELL AND COMMISSIONER GARY BARRETT TO RETIRE

Judge Roland N. Purnell and Commissioner Gary K. Barrett have announced that they will retire in early 2006. Judge Purnell will retire on February 24 after 14 years on the bench as a Judge and six years as a Commissioner. Commissioner Barrett will retire on March 24 after 10 years as a Commissioner.

Judge Purnell was appointed to the Municipal Court bench by Governor Pete Wilson in January 1992. He became a Superior Court Judge in 1998 upon unification of the Superior and Municipal Courts. He has presided over a full range of civil and criminal assignments. Before becoming a Judge, he worked as an FBI Agent, Deputy District Attorney, Senior Trial Attorney, Superior Court Commissioner and Superior Court Legal Research Attorney.

Judge Purnell earned his bachelor's degree from San Francisco State University and his law degree from University of California, Hastings College of the Law. Upon completion of his law degree, he worked as a Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation for four years. He then was an attorney for the Ventura County District Attorney's Office for 10 years before being hired as a Commissioner with the Ventura Superior Court, primarily hearing family law matters. He served as a Commissioner for six years and then became a Legal Research Attorney for the court in 1983. He worked as a Legal Research Attorney up to his appointment to the bench in 1992.

In 1993, Judge Purnell was named Municipal Court Judge of the Year by the Ventura County Trial Lawyers Association.

Commissioner Barrett began his assignment as a Commissioner with the Ventura County Municipal Court on December 22, 1995, having been selected by the Judges from over 220 candidates. He became a Superior Court Commissioner in 1998 upon unification of the Superior and Municipal Courts. As a Commissioner, he has presided over traffic, small claims, arraignments, and civil matters at both the Hall of Justice and East County Courthouse.

Commissioner Barrett received his law degree from Mid-Valley College of Law (now University of LaVerne) in 1979. He served as a Deputy District Attorney with the Ventura County District Attorney's Office for 10 years before being selected as a Commissioner. While at the District Attorney's Office, he was assigned to the General Felony Unit and supervised the Misdemeanor Unit.

Prior to earning his law degree, he served 12 years in law enforcement as a Police Officer for the City of Santa Paula and Deputy Sheriff with the Kern County Sheriff's Department. As a helicopter pilot with the United States Army, he was awarded the Silver Star, six Distinguished Flying Crosses and 24 Air Medals.

"The Judges of the Superior Court join with me in thanking Judge Purnell and Commissioner Barrett for their many years of public service within the Ventura County legal community," said Presiding Judge John R. Smiley. "Both of them have been outstanding Judicial Officers who have given much of themselves to the process of providing justice and fairness to the citizens of Ventura County. On behalf of all of the employees of the Ventura County Superior Court, I wish each of them all the best things that life outside the courthouse has to offer. They will be truly missed by each of us."

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